

USDA/Rural Development

Bismarck, North Dakota

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USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT/RURAL UTILITIES SERVICE PARTICIPATE IN DEDICATION OF NOAA WEATHER TRANSMITTER

NEW ROCKFORD, April 24, 2003. . . . On January 17, 2003, the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) awarded \$4,080,819 from its Weather Radio Transmitter Grant Program to extend the coverage of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Weather Radio System (NOAA Weather Radio) in rural America. These 63 grants, covering 71 sites in 21 states, were awarded to 11 electric cooperatives and nonprofits, four telecommunications cooperatives, and 47 local and state governments.

Eddy County received one of the RUS grants, and during formal dedication ceremonies of the new NOAA Weather Radio Transmitter, USDA Rural Development State Director Clare Carlson, along with Wayne Ahlgren, Field Representative for the USDA Rural Utilities, today presented two ceremonial checks to Eddy County representing a funding package for \$114,836 (\$34,950 Community Facility grant/\$79,886 Rural Utilities grant.)

"Each year, thousands of people die or lose property because they did not know soon enough about hazards, disasters, or emergencies," said State Director Clare Carlson. "But with a NOAA weather radio transmitter, residents will receive an early warning of approaching dangerous weather and other emergencies."

The USDA grant funds, along with many in-kind donations, were used to install a 1000-watt dual weather radio transmitter, antenna, transmitter shelter, and backup generator at Sheyenne, Eddy County, North Dakota. Total cost of project is \$233,000.

The NOAA Weather Service began broadcasting over the Sheyenne NOAA Weather Radio transmitter in early February. The 1,000-watt transmitter broadcasts on a frequency of 162.525 MHz with an effective broadcast range at about 40 miles. The Sheyenne transmitter will serve residents in parts of Benson, Eddy, Foster, Griggs, Ramsey and Wells counties as well as the Spirit Lake Nation Reservation.

In Fiscal Year 2002, USDA Rural Development provided over **\$76.7 million dollars** in loan and grant financing to North Dakota citizens.

USDA Rural Development is the lead federal entity for rural economic and community development needs. It administers financial and technical assistance through a network of state Rural Development offices, various non-profit and educational institutional partners, and its national office.

Further information on these and other rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

